



Genocide Watch  
The Alliance Against Genocide

## **GENOCIDE EMERGENCY ALERT: CENTRAL AFRICAN REPUBLIC, OCTOBER 2020**

Genocide Watch is issuing a Genocide Emergency for the Central African Republic (CAR), where 80% of the country is controlled by armed groups. Conflict between largely Muslim ex-Séléka rebels and Christian anti-Balaka militia endangers all civilians. Muslims have been disproportionately targeted, as have the Fulani within the Muslim population, and are hence facing persecution (Stage 8). Other vulnerable groups in the CAR include the [Ba'Aka and Bofi forest people, the Mboum, and the Biaka](#), who all face discrimination (Stage 3) and [cultural genocide](#).

The current CAR conflict began when Muslim Séléka rebels took control of the north and captured the capital Bangui in 2013. They ousted President Francois Bozizé. Séléka leader Michel Djotodia became the CAR's first Muslim president after decades of domination by ethnic groups from the CAR's south, west and centre. Christian anti-Balaka militia emerged in opposition to the Bangui government, claiming to defend their communities. Djotodia's successor in 2014, Catherine Samba-Panza, called for reconciliation, held elections and a referendum, but could not end the violence.

Muslims have been persecuted, with [80% of the Muslim population](#) driven from the country. A [2015 United Nations \(U.N.\) inquiry](#) found there was 'ethnic cleansing.' Genocide Watch rejects this term because it has no legal meaning. Forced displacement, the proper legal term, is a crime against humanity. The U.N. said there had been no genocide due to a lack of intent. However, forced displacement can be genocidal. CAR politics is characterised by the hate speech that is evidence of genocidal intent. The U.N. humanitarian chief flagged [early signs of genocide](#) in August 2017 when 2,000 Muslims were trapped in a church in Bangassou after fleeing their homes burned by anti-Balaka militia, who left Christian homes unburnt. Leaders in Bangassou and across the CAR then incited hatred and violence against Muslims, which the U.N. peacekeeping mission (MINUSCA) reported [after each major security incident](#). Ex-Séléka groups have also attacked Christian civilians to collectively punish anti-Balaka, such as in an [attack on Alindao in November 2018](#).

Fulani herders, who are often seen as outsiders, have been targeted by other Muslims as [divisions have formed between Muslim groups](#) on ethnic lines and over resources, says the International Crisis Group (ICG). In Ouaka and Haute-Kotto, the mainly Fulani Union for Peace in the CAR (UPC) has clashed with the Gula and Runga Popular Front for the Renaissance in the CAR (FPRC), which even allied itself with the anti-Balaka. When the FPRC and UPC clashed in November 2016, the U.N.'s Special Advisor on genocide prevention said the FPRC singled out Fulani civilians in Bria, killing 85 civilians and displacing 11,000. Fulani who stayed in Bria were trapped as the FPRC closed in.

The Fulani UPC has also reacted by committing atrocities. After the November 2016 attack, the UPC attacked Christians and Gula in Bakala, executing 32 civilians and displacing 10,000. The Fulani have been expanding into the southeast and parts of the west, engaging in violence in Bambouti, Obo and Zemio. Another armed group is the Return, Reclamation, Rehabilitation (3R), which claims to represent Fulani civilians. Human Rights Watch (HRW) says the 3R is [profiting from the crisis](#). In May 2019, 3R killed 46 people and displaced 12,000 in a [coordinated attack on three towns](#) in Ouham-Pendé. 3R recently [suspended its participation](#) in the 2019 peace accord, demanding an end to 'threats' as MINUSCA warned against 3R expansion.

**Genocide Watch considers the CAR to be at Stage 8, Persecution.**

**Genocide Watch recommends:**

- MINUSCA and the CAR government should ensure the safe return of IDP's to their homes.
- The U.N., France, and other donor nations should increase humanitarian assistance to CAR.
- War criminals on all sides should be [arrested, promptly tried, and imprisoned](#).
- Candidates in the December 2020 election who incite ethnic hatred should be disqualified.